

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

During the preparation of this feasibility study the National Park Service has consulted with affected public agencies, organizations, and individuals.

The primary method of working with agencies and American Indian tribes has been through the establishment of an agency coordinating team. The team has met to ensure that there is an understanding of the goals of this study and the procedures for conducting it. Meetings also were useful in exchanging information about related projects and programs. The team consists of representatives of federal, state, and local agencies, independent researchers, and individuals from private organizations and American Indian tribes. The technical team met to initially identify issues that the study should address, to review historical research and alternatives, and to review draft materials. A full list of all agencies and organizations that were invited to meetings of the technical team is presented under "Consultants" (p. 122).

A scoping newsletter was prepared and distributed in the fall of 1996. The newsletter, which included a summary of the purpose and scope of this study and the process used in its preparation, contained a response form to facilitate input and comment. The National Park Service distributed about 300 newsletters, and about 70 responses were received. Most of the responses were supportive of the designation of El Camino Real de los Tejas as a national historic trail, the protection of resources, and programs to help communities better appreciate their heritage. Two comments were received opposing the designation of El Camino Real. The commenters indicated that their opposition was due to the chance that private property rights could be lost, and they opposed the possible cost to government.

The National Park Service subsequently met with several representatives of groups with private property rights interests. Preliminary responses indicated that the group members favored the voluntary certification aspects of national historic trail administration. They supported legislative language that would prohibit the use of federal eminent domain authority by limiting any federal acquisition to properties with willing sellers. New commenters identified the following reasons for favoring designation:

- the rich cultural history along the route
- the significance and integrity of existing sites
- public appreciation, education and understanding of the history of Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana
- increased opportunities for cooperation between Texas and Mexico and for understanding the common heritage
- economic benefits
- increased tourism revenues

Questions and concerns were identified that have been addressed in this study.

- Will local historians be involved?
- Will key areas be identified?
- How will the study be conducted?

Will everyone get to see the study?

What are the time projections for completing the study?

Cost versus returns — is it worth it?

Southern Goliad route should be included.

International park should be a priority.

Would like nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and nomination as a national landmark to be included in the study.

Need markers on the roads used today to Eagle Pass and Guerrero.

The broad scope of the study should not obliterate the differences among cultural groups.

Landowners would be displaced because of rising property costs.

Privately owned land should not be designated.

Do not encroach on border ranches, it will be the death knell of the trail.

The costs are not worth it.

Letters were sent to American Indian tribes in Oklahoma and Louisiana. The National Park Service has made followup telephone calls to tribes.

To understand the significance of the part of the route that is in the United States, the National Park Service has conducted and compiled research on the entire route from Los Adaes, Louisiana, to Mexico City. The Mexican government has cooperated in the preparation of this study through the participation of the director of the Coahuila office of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

The National Park Service has consulted and coordinated with federal, state, and local officials in the preparation of this draft. In addition, historians have reviewed the preliminary draft to ensure accuracy and fairness in discussion of the historical events and places.